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ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

REVIEW

DECEMBER 1942

SHALL WE TEACH HATRED?

An Editorial

READING INTERESTS OF SLOW LEARNERS

Bernardine Schmidt

GAINING POWER THROUGH WRITING

June C. Ferebee

NEW EVIDENCE ON REMEDIAL READING

Arthur I. Gates

The Elementary English Review

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JOHN J. DEBOER, *Editor*

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John J. DeBoer, Editor

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Issues and Reflections

[Opinions expressed by contributors to this section do not necessarily represent the position of the National Council of Teachers of English.]

Suggestions Wanted

The National Council of Teachers of English is eager to know how it may best serve those of its members who are working at the elementary school level. Readers of the *Review* are urged to send suggestions to Dr. Dora V. Smith, chairman of the Elementary Section, at the University of Minnesota.

The staff of the *Review* particularly welcomes suggestions concerning editorial policies for the magazine. What types of articles are most desired? How may the present departments be improved? Should other departments be substituted or added? Write to the Editor, *Elementary English Review*, 211 W. 68th Street, Chicago Illinois.

Shall We Teach Them To Hate?

As the propaganda of wartime hostilities takes an increasingly and necessarily larger place in our contemporary American folkways, even the little children are adopting "enemy" stereotypes in their play and in their thinking. Many teachers are perplexed as to the role of the school in the formation of children's attitudes toward the Germans and the Japanese.

"Buying bonds and stamps for machine guns and bombers," a slogan born out of the necessity of the hour, implies a motivation for death and destruction which is at complete variance with the traditional aim of the elementary school.

Yet the issue should be clear. We are, or we should be, fighting for a people's world, in which the common man in Germany and in Japan as well as other nations will fully share in his government and in the material wealth available to mankind. Such a world will necessitate a feeling of solidarity among the masses of all countries. Hatreds created today in the young will be an obstacle in the building of such a world. Moreover, it's easier to hate Germans and Japanese who are geographically close to us than those who are overseas. Hatred thus becomes a divisive force which fights against us.

Yes, let us teach them to hate tyranny and prejudice, particularly the kind of racial and religious prejudice for which fascism stands. Let us teach them to hate hatred, and contempt for common folk, and the enslavement of men's minds which marks the fascist program every-

where. It is inevitable that those who have experienced the horrors of fascist invasion and depredation should hate the pawns of the Nazi and Japanese overlords. But in order to buttress our national will to victory we need only to see the nature of the menace with which the Nazi mentality confronts us.

Much more rational than a program of hatred for any peoples at this time is a policy of friendship for the peoples aiding us in this struggle. We should now resolutely undertake to re-interpret for the young the magnificent qualities which the people of Russia, China, England, and our other allies have demonstrated in their resistance against fascist barbarism throughout the world. From this day forth the schools have the task, through war and victory and the days to follow, of constructing world unity. For this goal we have thus far hardly begun to fight.

The Daily Renewal Of Our Faith—In Children

Teachers who add mankind's agony in the current world struggle to the minor discouragements of the classroom in their list of disabling anxieties will find a tonic in Bernardine Schmidt's astonishing article in this issue of the *Review*. Whether her findings cast doubt upon the validity of Binet scores or upon theories of the constancy of the IQ, they assuredly demonstrate the possibilities of inspired teaching in the transformation of warped young lives.

A class of feeble-minded girls—so

rated by competent psychologists—become self-reliant, useful members of society, capable of making judgments as home and office workers, as citizens, and as human beings in relation to others, and even more miraculously, they become good readers! How was it done?

Miss Schmidt offers no magic formula. What evidently happened was that underprivileged children, turned inward upon themselves by intellectual starvation or hostility in their very early years, gradually emerged from their isolation and bewilderment under friendly, patient guidance. If there is a key to the mystery, it must be found in the teacher's refusal to regard the children as pariahs or social cripples, and her matter-of-fact assumption that the youngsters could do things that normal people do. To be sure, the standards of the schoolroom were of a level and a kind appropriate to the individual learners. Activities and materials were constantly enriched by the teacher's ingenuity and the pupils' growing discovery of their own powers. The magic consisted in the teacher's simple faith in the potentialities of her children. There was no room for "scientific" fatalism in her creed.

Perhaps the fate of the world will be determined by our power to draw the appropriate analogy from the accomplishments of obscure school children like these to the future of mankind. Contempt for the common, little people is the root principle of fascist thinking.

J. J. D. B.

Reading Habits and Interests of Mentally Retarded Girls

BERNARDINE G. SCHMIDT

Ericsson Lower Vocational Center
Chicago

Miss Schmidt's problem in teaching these "mentally deficient" girls was a special one, but her method would be effective with any group of young people. She built reading interests by first creating keen interests in life. The following anecdotes illustrate some of the effects of her technique (see editorial note on page 274):

"When La Vern telephoned me one evening we happened on the subject of personal appearance. I mentioned that the girls always kept themselves looking so nice and attractive. La Vern commented:

'You know, all of us girls have changed so much since we started at the center. When we first began we didn't pay any attention to our looks. We didn't care at all. And then, pretty soon we began to try combing our hair differently. We'd try out new styles on each other. We got interested in the best way to choose and use make-up. We started to pick our clothes because of styles and colors that looked good on us. Bit by bit we got interested in our appearance and it sort of grew on us. Now we can enjoy making ourselves just as attractive as we can.'

This same line of conversation was mentioned by Flemmie to me when she commented on a girl who had enrolled in the center just before she left. Flemmie had recently met her and was amazed at how attractive she was.

"Another comment by La Vern (now graduated) while visiting Sunday, and also echoed in several letters from Gladys, Evelyn and others:

'You don't know how much it means to the girls to have their teacher call up and exchange letters with them. You'd be surprised, but when a teacher treats girls the way you do, going out with them and letting them call up and visit, why it even makes their parents respect the girls more. You should see how proud our mothers are when they mention to the neighbors that my teacher called me up, or that I'm going out with you. Everybody begins to believe we must amount to something or you wouldn't be bothered with us. And we get to believe it, too!'"

—Editor

Numerous studies have been made of the reading interests of elementary, junior and senior high school pupils, but for the most part they have been concerned with so-called average children. This report is the story of an attempt to develop an effective reading program built upon the needs and interests of one-hundred six-

teen retarded girls in several consecutive classes in a school on Chicago's northwest side.

The girls were between the ages of thirteen and eighteen years, with a range of IQ's from 38 to 69, distributed as shown in Table I.

TABLE I
IQ RANGES AND MEDIANS FOR SEPARATE AGE GROUPS

Age	Number in Group	Percentage of Total	IQ's Range	Median
13-0; 13-11	16	13.8	42-66	53
14-0; 14-11	16	13.8	50-69	62
15-0; 15-11	46	39.6	42-67	61
16-0; 16-11	26	22.4	38-65	49
17-0; 17-11	10	8.6	48-68	48
18-0; 18-11	2	1.8	50-52	51
Totals	116	100.0	38-69	56.04

Previous to their transfer to special classes the girls had been in regular grades, ranging from second through eighth. They had spent a minimum of eight and a maximum of thirteen years in an elementary school environment, yet achievement was practically nil. Reading performance at a good first grade level was the maximal attainment at the beginning of the study and this by about one-tenth of the group. Many of the remainder could not even read their own names in print.

Their previous school environments had these characteristics in common: (1) all had been formal, traditional classrooms, with emphasis on subject-matter mastery; (2) all had been teacher-dominated; (3) all had been openly antagonistic to the child who could not meet academic expectations.

The social backgrounds were hardly more inspiring. All were first generation Americans, with ancestral nationalities concentrated among Polish, Italian, and German stock, and the other third scattered among twelve other nationalities. Most of the homes were in slum areas, as defined by Evjen in his study of housing and growth of city as factors in problems of neglected youth.¹ Two-thirds of all girls lived in neighborhoods where the monthly rental was eighteen dollars and

fifty cents, and the range was from eight dollars to twenty-nine dollars. Slightly more than one-fifth came from communities where the range was from twenty-nine to thirty-seven dollars, with a median rental of thirty-three dollars.² More than half came from families of either complete dependence, or subsistence level with partial dependence, while only eleven families had total supporting incomes of thirty dollars or more per week.

Forty-six girls came from broken homes; in twenty-four cases the father was out of the home; in fourteen cases, the mother was missing; in eight cases, both parents were deceased. In almost two-thirds of the families the mother was in very poor health. Four parents were residents of the State Institution for the Insane, and one had been committed to Kankakee, but had escaped.

About one-third of the girls were reported to be free from physical defects or malfunctions, but of the remainder, one-third were afflicted with two serious defects, and ten girls presented more than two. The most common abnormal conditions found were anemia, glandular malfunctions, and defective vision. About one-fourth of all girls were classified as free of defects, and in good general health.

Most of the homes were in areas of high rates of delinquency. One-tenth

¹ Victor H. Eyjen, *Leisure and Delinquency*. Chicago: Character Associates Inc. 1938. Pp. 5-16.

² Adapted from Richard O. Lang, *Census Data for the City of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1934. Pp. 672.

lived in areas where one of every three children held a police record; about twenty-per cent were in areas where delinquency claims one out of four; and about eight per cent lived in areas where one of every five children and youths were known to the courts.³

Probably the most amazing information revealed was the paucity of interests and the sordidness of out-of-school experiences. Of the entire group no child had ever been to a circus, none had ever been more than five blocks away from home, none had ever been to the Loop, and more than half had never been to a neighborhood park. Public playgrounds, field houses, zoos, or flower shows were utterly unknown to them.

Their leisure-time activities included occasional use of the beaches in the summer; playing simple games, such as "hop skotch," "catch," and "jump rope," in the "street outside the house"; an occasional movie; and, most often, "just sitting talking." They helped as much as they were permitted in household duties, but usually mothers preferred to take over tasks rather than teach the girls how to perform them.

The only topic that interested the girls was vocations. What they wanted most was to get out of school and get a job. It was true their economic need was great, but there also was a hope that once out of school they could get a new start. They felt they could expect nothing but failure while in school. Discouragement, inferiority, failure, poor health, poor homes, low ability, with all this against them the girls asked only that the school let them alone until they were legally free to quit.

Upon the basis of this detailed knowledge, a program was planned to enrich social contacts and experiences, and ex-

pand and intensify interests. The process of building had to include the provisions of such ordinary experiences as use of city transportation and trips to the parks. When the circus came that summer, post-cards were sent to all inviting them to meet with their teacher so all could enjoy the clowns and elephants together.

Gradually new lights began to shine in tired eyes. It took time, but soon they began to seek new experiences themselves, and soon they were eager for every new contact they could make. No definite formal approach to reading was attempted.⁴ It would have been useless in the beginning, and once experiences and interests began to develop, the children themselves made the approach.

The center has a large children's library, containing informational and story books, picture books, magazines, and even a file of pamphlets and pictures. The material is suited in content, format, and interest to children from the pre-reading level to those who can read appreciatively in the senior high school fields. The perennial children's favorites are there, and between three and four new books are added just off the press each month. Part of the fiction is shelved beneath a large bay window, where panels between windows make effective bulletin boards for library news.

The teacher kept up the display of new and especially attractive books, and kept the library news up-to-date. Beyond this, she guided the learning activities which grew out of daily activities and which, once begun, moved ahead on their own motivation.⁵ Her primary duty was not the teaching of any subject-matter, but the enrichment of the lives of these

⁴ This report is limited to the study of independent leisure reading only.

⁵ The teacher's role in these self-expanding learning units is described in "New Social Horizons for the Mentally Retarded," *The American Citizen*, Nov., 1941. Pp. 43-50.

³ Based on delinquency rate charts in Clifford R. Shaw, *Delinquency Areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1929. P 202.

underprivileged girls by increasing their contacts with realities in their immediate environment.

When the group made their first enthusiastic visit to the Telephone Company, the teacher was surprised to hear Mamie ask the guide: "I'd like to see the information girls. I was reading some of the books in our library and they told how the girls answer questions. I'd like to see them. It seemed hard."

This was especially interesting, because Mamie had been referred to the center credited with pre-primer reading ability, and on her record it was stated, "she refuses to open a book." The telephone trip was taken less than ten weeks after her arrival. The teacher noticed other signs that the library had been in use. Some spoke of diagrams and charts they had been studying. Others mentioned pamphlets on how to use the phone correctly. None of these comments were being made to the teacher; they were simply part of the general conversation.

When they returned to school, many went directly to the library to locate materials that had been talked about. Some had the books in their desks. Most of the rest of the day was used in finding what the library had to offer about telephones and their operators. Two important results were noted from this trip. First, it marked the first conscious use of the library; and, second; this increased and continuous demand for books prompted one of the girls to ask, "Couldn't we have somebody take charge of the library so we can tell who has different books?" This was a suggestion which would have had to be made in the interests of orderly library procedure, but to have it suggested by one of the pupils had not been expected.

It was but another step to the introduction of the public library, not for the

sake of borrowing books from it—they were not yet ready for that—but to become acquainted with their systems for keeping books in order. Shortly thereafter a questionnaire was prepared on library habits and favorite books which the girls were asked to fill out. Where reading difficulties were met, teacher and pupil worked the form out together.

They were told the record was merely to give their teacher more information about the kinds of reading they liked, so they could help her do a better job of teaching. Teacher-pupil relationships were such that they felt free to co-operate by answering them truthfully. The first part of the questionnaire concerned the use of the public library, preferences in informational and fictional selections, and the best book the pupil could remember reading. The second part was limited to the center library and pertained to (1) extent of use; (2) interests in format; (3) preferences for factual material as against story books; (4) reasons for choosing books; (5) re-reading well-liked books; (6) favorite types of books, and best books of each kind; and (7) use of the magazine section and favorite magazines.

Three weeks after the class had visited the public library, the results of the questionnaire showed thirty-five were borrowing books regularly on two-week loans. Twenty-two took out two books at a time; eleven borrowed one book, and two took three books, each loan period. Twenty-six had their own library cards, while nine were using a friend's card. Twenty stated they sometimes returned books late because they had not finished them; six occasionally forgot to bring them in on time; and five reported prompt returns all the time.

Fifty-four reported non-fiction as well as fiction loans, while sixty-two bor-

rowed story-books exclusively. Twenty-one definitely preferred history books to fiction; sixty liked fiction better; and thirty-four liked both equally well. The lives of great men and women were preferred to fiction by ninety-one; twenty liked each kind to the same degree; and five definitely preferred fiction. Stories about life in other countries attracted ninety-two, while twenty-four did not care for them. Fifty-six liked stories about transportation and machinery, and sixty did not.

The survey of the center library showed ninety-two girls borrowed two books at a time, while twenty-four took one at a time. There was no child who did not use it regularly. Most of the girls reported keeping books out overtime because they had not finished. Seventy-one frequently returned books overdue, while forty-five usually returned them within a week. Eighty-seven drew books for other folks at home and in the neighborhood, as well as for themselves.

The group was more indifferent to format than had been expected. Only twenty-three definitely preferred books with pictures; twenty actually preferred books without pictures; while seventy-three had no preference. As Evelyn said, "what's the difference if it's a good book?" The size of the book seemed to make little difference. Twenty-three preferred big books, ten preferred little books, and eighty-three showed no preference. In the same way, sixteen preferred new books, five preferred old books, and ninety-five liked them all.

There was definite preference for the "reader" as against the one story volume, seventy-eight preferring the former, while only thirty-eight preferred the story-book. Perhaps the length of selections in the readers was more suitable to their atten-

tion span, which was, however, developing rapidly. Geographical tales were low in the list of preferences, only nineteen girls favoring them to story books.

At this stage in their use of libraries, their response to the question, "Why do you choose certain books?" was interesting. Approximately thirty-three per cent chose a book because it had an interesting name; twenty-five per cent, because it had pictures; fourteen per cent, because another girl said it was a good book, nine per cent because the teacher had said it was interesting, and nine per cent because they liked other books by the same author. Only four stated they tried to get a book from the library after the teacher had read part of that book to the class. In fact, nineteen emphatically stated they *never* selected a book introduced by the teacher. These reasons given for the selection of books must be qualified by the fact that since their transfer there had been as yet no direct or formal teacher motivation of reading. Neither had there been much time or opportunity to become well acquainted with books and associate their authors. Their answers at this time were almost entirely a reflection of their previous experiences and habits.

This same antagonism to literature introduced in school was shown by the fact that two-thirds of the girls never took a book out from the library that they had read in whole or in part in class; but more than half of the girls did re-read favorite library books of their own selection. In kinds of books preferred, the most favored were stories of girls growing up and going away to school; next came exciting adventure stories; history stories were listed third; stories of family life came fourth; and stories of other countries were voted last.

The magazine section of the library had as yet received little attention, for

only sixteen girls had read any of the magazines at that time. They listed their favorite magazines as *Radio Guide*, *True Stories*, *True Confessions*, *Screen*, and *Woman's Day*.

On this first questionnaire, their favorite adventure stories were *Dick Tracy*, *The Lone Ranger*, *In Quest of Treasure*, *Tarzan*, *Flying High*, *The Missing Guest*, and *Jimmy Allen*, *Secret Operative*. Their favorite girls stories were, in order, *Heidi*, *Little Miss Broadway*, *Polly-What's-Her-Name*, *Honey Bunch*, *Her First Garden*, and *Janet Hardy in Hollywood*. When asked to name the best book they ever read, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was most popular, while *Heidi*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Happy Days*, *Peter Rabbit*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Little Miss Broadway* followed in order. Surely their literary backgrounds were meager and their selections haphazard.

With expanding interests in school hours came also continually expanding interests outside of school. Many found part-time employment, and in this way they achieved still greater personal satisfaction, in having found themselves sufficiently useful to others to be compensated. A second survey of leisure-time activities found no scarcity, but a wide variety of active interests, including active sports, scouting, reading, tap-dancing, needle-work, concerts, dances, movies, cooking, and piano-playing. More than three-fourths had joined some neighborhood or church club, and were participating in its group activities. This increased social awareness and personality growth was also reflected in their reading interests, as shown by the book withdrawal library records.

These records were catalogued by general fields of interest, recognizing that no arbitrary boundaries could exist. Tabula-

tions were made each period for each pupil of the number of books read, the interest fields included, and the number read in each field. The books were also classified as to grade levels.⁶ Records for each pupil were cumulated by quarters so that changes in interests, as well as increase in amount, and growth in quality of reading could be traced. It was also possible to group the most constant of the interest fields, and so to picture the changes which had taken place in interest development during the year.

The total number of interests tabulated from the entire group were twenty-five in the first period, thirty-two in the second period, and thirty-one in the final period. The ten most popular interests and the number of girls reading in them are given in Tables II, III, and IV for each of the periods, respectively.

TABLE II
FAVORITE INTERESTS IN FIRST PERIOD

Interest Field	Number
Fairy tales	40
Growing up	26
Girls' adventures	20
Health	14
Heroes of long ago	14
Ways of living in other countries	10
Farms	10
Animals and pets	10
Toys	6

TABLE III
FAVORITE INTERESTS IN SECOND PERIOD

Interest Field	Number
Growing up	88
Girls' adventures	67
Books and authors	53
Nature	52
Stories of America	49
Fairy tales	35
Animals	28
Everyday science	24
Health	23
Ways of living in other countries	23

⁶ The basis for grade classification were Miriam Blanton Huber, *Story and Verse for Children*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1940, and Terman and Lima, op. cit., Pp. 95-256.

TABLE IV
FAVORITE INTERESTS IN THIRD PERIOD

Interest Field	Number
Books and authors	98
Growing up	68
Animals and pets	44
Fairy tales	43
Girls' adventures	39
Everyday science	38
Ways of living in other countries	36
Health	27
Biography	26
Machinery	23

A definite increase in the number reading in each of these favorite fields was evident from the first period to the third. Also, "hero stories," "farms," and "toys," which appeared in the first period, dropped out of the ten highest and did not reappear. In the second period new and definitely mature interest fields moved into the upper decile, such as "books and authors," "nature stories," "stories of America," and environmental science. From the second to the third period still further growth was made. "Books and authors" moved up from third place to

top the list, with a larger number engaged in that field than in any other field in the entire study. "Nature stories," and "stories of America" dropped out of this first ten, and were replaced by "biography" and "machinery," both very mature interest fields.

Their reading interests followed closely those reported by Terman and Lima⁷ for average girls of their age range, except that boys' adventures, stories of the Bible, and poetry, although present, were found less frequently in these reading patterns. What Terman descriptively terms "trashy adult novels" and sentimental love stories were totally absent. In their place, these girls read widely in history, science, machinery and biography, which Terman found to be absent from the average girl's reading preferences.

The range and average number of interests in which pupils of the various age groups engaged are given in Table V.

⁷ Terman and Lima, *Children's Reading*. New York: D. Appleton Century Co., 1932. Pp. 40-43.

TABLE V
RANGE AND MEDIAN NUMBER OF INTERESTS FOR EACH AGE GROUP
BY TEN-WEEK PERIODS

Age	First Period		Second Period		Third Period	
	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
13	0-3	1	1-7	3	3-7	4
14	1-4	2	2-6	3	3-10	5
15	0-3	2	2-6	3	3-10	6
16	0-2	1	0-8	3	1-10	6
17	0-2	1	1-5	3	3-6	4-5
18	1-2	1	3-5	4	3-9	7

In the second period there was a wide scattering of interests, an attempt to sample many fields not previously known. In the third period some girls were still in a state of scattered interests, but most had concentrated on a small selected group of major interests.

Another index of growth lay in amount of reading accomplished. While no emphasis on quantity was made, the very act of extensive reading was a measure of accomplishment for a group who began with actual distaste for reading. The total number of books read for each period are shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI
NUMBER OF BOOKS READ EACH TEN-WEEK PERIOD ACCORDING TO
AGE GROUPS

Age	First Period		Second Period		Third Period	
	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
13	0-6	2	1-12	7	3-14	8
14	1-4	2	2-11	7	3-15	10
15	0-6	1	1-12	4	3-14	9
16	0-4	1	0-12	4	1-16	7
17	0-2	1	4-6	5	4-12	8
18	0-2	1	3-5	4	4-14	9

These results compare favorably with the report by Terman and Lima of eight books per ten-week period for thirteen and fourteen-year-olds, and six for fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds as shown in their study of children from well-to-do communities with better than average cultural opportunities.

While the number of fields continued to increase from the first period to the third, the trend toward concentration within a few selected fields also increased. The increased total number of fields was due to the general increase in amount of reading, and was scattered over many supplementary fields. There were few cases where reading was entirely concentrated in one field, and all were existent in the first period only. It was noted that when this total concentration was broken, that field dropped from individual favor very quickly, and usually faded from the reading pattern completely by the end of the study.

The twelve fiction books read by the greatest number of girls during the entire year were: *Heidi*, *Little Women*, *Blue Fairy Book*, *Little Men*, *Silver Skates*, *Pinocchio*, *Dicken's Christmas Carol*, *Rain on the Roof*, *Pool of Stars*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, and *Elijah, the Fishbite*. The non-fiction favorites according to library withdrawals were *The Way of Democracy*, *Changes All Around Us*, *On the Long Road*,

Where Our Ways of Living Come From, and *Invincible Louisa*.

At the end of the program the number using the public library had increased from thirty-five to eighty-three, of whom each had her own library card. Greater thought was used in selecting books, as shown by the second questionnaire. More than four-fifths stated they chose books because they had enjoyed other books by the same author; slightly more than one-tenth selected theirs mainly on teacher recommendation, and none made their choice primarily on the basis of pictures. They listed as their favorite books the following fiction: **Little Women*—Alcott; *The Pool of Stars*—Meigs; *Tom Sawyer*—Clemens; **Heidi*—Spyri; *Prince and the Pauper*—Clemens; **Under the Lilacs*—Alcott; **Little Men*—Alcott; *Elijah, the Fishbite*—Turnbull; *Here Comes Mary Ellen*—Justus; *Dr. Doolittle Series*—Lofting; *Huckleberry Finn*—Clemens; **Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*—Wiggin; **Anne of Green Gables*—Montgomery; *Little Colonel Series*—Johnston; and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*—Lagerlof.

Six of this list—those whose titles are starred—are among the twenty books most liked by average and gifted girls in Terman's study. Two, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, are included in the list of boys' favorites from the same study.

These latter two are also included in the list of ten favorite books listed by high school boys and girls.⁸

Unlike the average and gifted group studied by Terman, or the high school students in the survey by Center and Persons, these girls also included books of non-fiction among their favorites. High on their list of travel books were *Star of India*—Harris; *Children of the Fiery Mountain*—Cannon; and *Mexico*—Castillo. Their best books on Americanism included *Stories of Americans at Work*—Robinson; *The Way of Democracy*—King; *Democracies and Dictatorships*—Allen; and *America, Then and Now*—Thompson.

The magazine section was being used by eighty-eight girls who selected the following magazines as their favorites: *American Girl*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Radio Guide*, *Young America*, and *Woman's Day*.

To determine the results in reading of

⁸ Center and Persons, "The Leisure-Reading of New York City High-School Students," *The English Journal*, Nov. 1936. Pp. 720.

the interest developmental program, the specific phases of leisure reading investigated were amount of reading; nature, extent, and concentration of interest fields; quality of literature selected as favorites by the pupils. In amount of reading they equalled average children of their age group, and in some instances slightly exceeded that average. Their interests were found to compare very favorably with those of mentally gifted as well as average adolescent girls, and their favorite books included not only fiction of literary merit, but non-fiction as well.

The personality gains from the program were evident, while in school, by improved co-operative planning of learning activities in the class-room, by their readiness to participate actively in school organizations, and by their appointment and adequate fulfillment of school honor positions. That the gains were permanent was shown when a later study made after they had been out of school several years showed them to be employable, happy, and socially competent.

Gaining Power Through Writing

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FOR MY fifth and sixth-graders writing is a two-fold kind of experience. They prepare articles and reports on subjects which they have studied for a considerable length of time. Out of a generous fund of information and understanding each child selects some unit or phase of the big topic and writes it up in his own way. This can be a very satisfying task. It is also a laborious one, calling for well-directed and sustained effort to make the end product correct and clean and clear. The children are made aware of the dual purpose behind this struggle. They accept the fact that any work to be given to another or to be recorded must be the best that they can do. In addition they realize that they are extending their power to write with correctness and clarity.

Writing For Fun

At other times they do a quite different kind of writing; they write solely for the fun of it. Attention is centered on the process—and the joy. In so far as possible all inhibiting factors are cleared away, and only the outpouring of ideas is fostered. The goal is to develop in each child the ability to put down spontaneously and sincerely what he himself thinks and feels. With tens and elevens much of this writing is stories, quantities of stories when the children become free. It is to this form of creative expression that I shall confine myself here.

Those who write may, if they choose, read their stories aloud to the group. Although this sharing is purely voluntary, no budding author has as yet refrained. We frankly make the reading time a pleasure time, and all unfavorable criticism is banned. Yet magic works in the

experience, for out of a welter of much that is mediocre and crude, better and better stories begin to appear, until at length there come occasional ones of such excellent quality that it is difficult to credit their child source. Such a tale is "The Love Story," another episode in the lives of the Five Bears, who have continued to be favorite characters with each succeeding group I teach.

The Love Story

The clock struck twelve. A silent figure slipped down the Five Bear's lane. It was carrying something that looked like a guitar. The figure was humming a love song. "Oh love, oh love," the figure was whispering.

Next morning came, Sunday morning. Mo found a note pinned to Nig's empty bed. It read:

"I have gone to sing a love song to Patricia. If she refuses me, I don't think I shall ever come home. If she loves me I shall come home with her as my bride."

Mo giggled his silly little giggle. He knew that the letter had come out of the book of etiquette for the man in love.

"Father!" Mo exclaimed, "Nig is in love."

Father Bear grunted sleepily. It wasn't news to him, but he got up and sloshed his feet into his heel-less slippers and scuffed down the hall to Nig's room.

At eight when the Five Bears and Daisy were eating breakfast there came a feeble knock at the back door. In stepped Nig with two black eyes and a very red ear, and he was limping. The once beautiful guitar was hanging around his neck.

"She has refused me," he broke out tragically.

"So I see," barked Father Bear unsympathetically.

"You'd better go to bed," said Mother Bear coldly. It was the only way she could think of to get rid of him.

"You, my dear Mo," Nig said, "may

¹ Miss Ferebee is one of the authors of the well-known recent volume, *They All Want to Write*.

have the pleasure of taking Daisy May to Sunday School." Nig was still feeling romantic. Mo groaned. He knew what it was to take Daisy to Sunday School.

Finally the four and Daisy were off. They had left Nig in bed, smelling terribly of liniment and reading *How to Win Your Love*. When they got to church Mo warned Daisy about how quiet she must be.

"Aw wight, Mo," she said.

When they got in Daisy went prancing up the aisle, saying hello loudly to anyone she knew. Mo was so mad at her that he forgot himself and yelled at the top of his lungs, "You—you thing! Come here this instant!"

Daisy slowly turned around. "Oh, Mosy," she squeaked, "you are in church. You mustn't yell." Then she put her fingers to her mouth. "Shush," she said, and turning she scrambled up the aisle to the front row and sat down.

Mo was so mad that he didn't know what to do. He started to let out one of his famous screams, but then a thought came to him. He stopped with his mouth open. He was in church. Mo blushed and blushed. Everyone was looking at him. Slowly he walked up the aisle, looking very silly with his hair going every which way and a face that looked like a tomato with hair. He grabbed Daisy May by one ear and scrambled to a seat. Then Sunday School started. He found himself beside Patricia Bear. Patricia Bear was feeling very sympathetic and good that morning after having beaten up Nig the night before.

"She—she isn't very good, is she?" she whispered, nodding at Daisy.

"Oh," said Mo, still a little upset, "why, yes. No," he added, giving innocent Daisy a kick.

Everything was all right till the plate was passed. Mo was so nervous that he still shook, and in reaching for the plate he gave a jerk and dropped it. Crash, bang! Money bounced everywhere. Everybody started scrambling for it. Mo thought he had come to the end and would die presently. He made one last effort.

"Patricia," he said above the noise, "make up with Nig for my sake. Please, please. He can take care of Daisy, he can."

"Oh," said Patricia, grabbing a quarter on the roll, "I have. I called him up this morning."

Mo, who was Mother's pet and not used to any strain, quietly fainted. From then on Daisy May had more respect for Mo.

"My bruvver can faint," she would say proudly.

Mo was proud of her too. "My sister can make more trouble than a thousand bandits." Nig never had any quarrel after that about taking Daisy May out.

Three Reasons For Growth

There seem to be three vital reasons for the growth my children make in story-writing power. The first, and perhaps the least influential, is the guidance I give. During sharing time I watch for the use of sound story-telling techniques and often point out their helpfulness. After a tempting beginning or an effective bit of suspense I may stop the reader for a brief moment to let the others realize how eager they are for him to go on. Or I may ask that a vividly described action be read again while we close our eyes to see better the moving picture it presents. In countless similar ways I try to help the children feel what makes a story catch and hold its audience. In this I am aided immeasurably by the spontaneous reactions of the listeners themselves, but I shall say more about that later. It is important to note that no technique is mentioned before it appears in the stories themselves, and even then it is appreciatively savored rather than discussed.

In this connection it may be well to indicate how very immature the early evidences of story-telling power may be. Jack was in the less able half of a beginning fifth grade group when he wrote the following story. In addition to numerous mechanical errors, which are not here reproduced, it had many faults. Yet two things of merit shine through. Jack saw the tale unfold as an actuality in his imagination and he was able to imbue

his written version with that same sense of reality. Furthermore, he so ordered events as to carry out his simple, child-like plot.

Trouble

One day the five little bears were playing that they were in the army. Nig was the general.

"Let's go over to Roy Bear's house and take him prisoner," said Meinie.

"That's a good idea," laughed Eenie.

All five bears crept along the backyard fence of Roy Bear's house. "We'll tie him up," said Mo.

"And we'll scare him," laughed Meinie.

Nig said, "I will climb the plum tree and spy on Roy Bear."

Nig climbed the plum tree. Just as he got to the top of the tree he saw Roy Bear come out of the house with his mother and two friends. They were his cousins. One was Tommy Bear and the other was Josephine Bear. They were going to make taffy.

Tommy Bear asked, "Where are we going to make taffy?"

Roy said, "Let's make it right under the plum tree."

"Yes," said Mother Bear. She put the tub right down under the plum tree. They put the gookie taffy in the tub. All of the children were stirring the taffy including Mrs. Bear. Nig's eyes glared at the taffy. Just then Nig lost his grip. Down he fell. Closer to the taffy he fell. He caught hold of a branch, but not for long. Splish! Ho, ho! Plums dropped everywhere and two plums hit Mrs. Bear right in the face.

Tommy and Josephine ran as fast as they could, they were so scared of Nig because he had taffy all over him and he looked like a ghost. When Eenie, Meenie, Meinie, and Mo saw Nig with all the taffy over him they thought that he was a ghost too, and went home as fast as they could. When their mother saw them running as fast as they could her eyes nearly popped out. When she saw what was running after them she ran into the house to get the rolling pin. The four children ran into the house and behind their mother. When Nig with all the taffy on him came in there came a lowering of the arm and then HO, HO! Nig had the biggest bump on his

head that I ever saw. When Mother heard the Ho, ho, she knew it was Nig and she sent him right to bed for trying to scare the children.

J. T.

Abetting my conscious direction in this matter of shaping stories and using language effectively is a force that I find difficult to explain. I refer to the subtle interplay existing between the story-maker and his audience—an interplay to which a child grows increasingly sensitive as he is alternately one and then the other. No matter how oblivious he may seem of the children in front of him, and at times he is so pleasurably engrossed in his own reading that he appears lost to all else, he does respond to audience demands. How else can I account for each child's growing sense of sureness in knowing what to enhance and what to discard, until at length stories come to be written with flavor and economy?

Both my direction and the influence of the audience would avail little if stories did not come in abundance. Therefore, everything possible is done to keep alive the spirit of adventure and fun. When consumed with the joy of invention a child unwittingly releases his true thinking and feeling into his story. That is what stamps many a crude little effort with the hall mark of creativeness and sincerity. Anything that leads to self-consciousness or to concern with externals tends to interrupt the absorption of the writer and to stifle the flow of individual expression. Even the act of writing itself is a stumbling block as anyone knows who has watched a child's slow-moving pencil try to keep pace with his racing mind. So I close my pedagogical eyes to strange spellings and smudgy, illegible papers; instead I see only that the child has written another story. If I can keep the sense of satisfaction alive he will continue writing, and it is through repeated effort that growth comes. For that reason

stories are rarely corrected and copied. In these early years it is better to try fresh experimentation than to spend time laboring over a finished thing. Since the purpose is to foster the process and the joy, no great importance is attached to a single product. Stories are often as honestly revealing as the one that follows when the child author feels unhampered and secure.

"Children, I have a treat for you," said Miss Flower, the Bear's teacher, "a special treat."

"What is it?" asked the class in chorus. "Is it ice cream and cake?"

"Oh, no, much better than that," said the teacher. "Miss Brown, she is one of the teachers in a western university, she has come to see how boys and girls act."

Miss Brown smiled and began to speak: "I love to come to visit schools and see the boys and girls. You remind me of my childhood. I teach older boys and girls, but they are almost grown up, while you are only beginning life. How I envy Miss Flower, your beloved teacher, for she has you with her every day."

Miss Flower was very jealous of Miss Brown, but she hid her own feelings and offered Miss Brown her chair. She didn't know Nig had put a tack in the chair. Miss Brown sat down. Miss Brown got up rather fast and started for the door.

"I never did like children," she said as she started through the door.

"You shouldn't have done that, children," said Miss Flower, but she gave them each ten cents to buy a good humor with.

L K

Despite the pleasure found in story-writing it does not go on unabated throughout the year. Periods of maximum output alternate with periods of lull during which effort is directed toward other forms of activity and enrichment. It is in the non-writing periods that the reservoir of ideas fills again.

Writing For Social Purpose And For Pleasure

This, briefly, is the scheme that a few of us have followed in differentiating between writing done to serve a social purpose and that done for pleasure and release alone. In the former we hold children to much conscious effort and to high standards of content and workmanship. In the latter we have no standards at all. Our sole concern is to so loose each child from his self-consciousness and his fears that he can find and strengthen his own, unique language power.

Although in practice these two ways of teaching are definitely separated, their results gradually merge. More and more the factual writing takes on the vitality, the stamina, and the personal flavor that develop in the creative work. The mastery of mechanics, so insistently stressed in such things as reports and letters, is increasingly evident in any piece of personal work put into finished form. And best of all, satisfaction and delight in writing continue to flourish like the green bay tree.

The foregoing values all have to do with improvement in English. Yet if I had to toss all that out the window I still would not relinquish our free writing time. Too often I have seen bewildered, misfit children through their stories alone find a satisfying way to realize power and self respect. Since these are the ones already overwhelmed with feelings of inadequacy, correction of any kind would have shut off creative effort at its very start. This reinforces my belief that in all writing which is strictly personal the habit of self expression should be sturdy and thriving before attention is given to matters of mechanics and form.

Diagnosis and Remediation in Reading

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IT is difficult, indeed often impossible, to prove the existence of a trend in its early stages. It is my impression that the nine tendencies which I shall mention are really trends but I may be mistaken. I shall not attempt to give proof that they really exist. I shall merely mention the trends and offer certain evidence from recent experiments done by my students and myself, mainly unpublished, which would seem to justify, even if it does not confirm, such trends.

1. Early Diagnosis Important

A tendency to make diagnoses early in order to foresee and prevent difficulties as contrasted with the method of diagnosing difficulties after they have arisen.

There is little doubt about the existence of this trend. Its validity is suggested both by common sense and by experimentation. In some of my own recent studies it appears to be possible to determine at the time children enter school many weaknesses, defects and peculiarities which are likely to produce difficulties in reading during the first three grades. This is justification for reading readiness tests.

A doctor's dissertation by Miss Cornelia Tomes¹ indicates that certain germs of reading ability and disability likely to flower at any time during the first seven grades can be detected during the first year. This study was based upon remarkably full test and observational cumulative records on 300 pupils during the first seven grades. Miss Tomes' study shows that reading ability measured by

¹ Tomes, Cornelia A., "A Ten-Year Study of Certain Factors Related to Reading and General Achievement in the Elementary Grades," New York: Teachers College, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1942.

tests at the end of the first grade gave a correlation with reading ability in the fourth grade of .66 and a correlation with ability at the end of the seventh grade of .55. Between reading ability at the end of the fourth grade and reading ability at the end of the seventh the correlation was approximately .80. The correlation of intelligence as measured by the Binet in the first grade with reading at the end of the fourth or seventh grade was decidedly lower and the same was true of socio-economic status and other factors, including teachers' marks which stood, however, relatively high in the series of appraisals. These figures seem to show that at no stage is reading achievement dependent fully upon socio-economic status, intelligence, and other factors commonly appraised in the case of beginning children. Reading ability depends greatly upon a variety of special characteristics and circumstances such as those we are isolating in studies of reading readiness in the first grade. These factors apparently discernible to a considerable extent, but not fully, in the first grade play a very influential role in determining reading interest and ability thereafter, at least to the end of the seventh grade. The fact that these are factors which exist in advance of their functioning in connection with reading at any grade level comprises convincing theoretical evidence of the possibility and desirability of early diagnosis and analysis for the purpose of anticipating and preventing reading difficulties.

2. Critical Periods

There is a growing tendency to recognize that while reading abilities as meas-

ured by tests usually show a rather continuous curve of development, there are, nevertheless, certain rather critical periods in the program of an individual child. That the beginning stage is very critical indeed has long been recognized. Not so universally has it been realized that the critical beginning stage for some pupils occurs before they enter school and for others at different points after undertaking the first grade program. A second critical period is at the time of making a transition from primary reading techniques to the skills involved in reading more rapidly than the speaking rate and acquiring various specialized types of intermediate grade reading. For the majority of children this stage is reached late in the second grade or early in the third, but for others it appears earlier or later. It involves such changes as substituting perception of words in thought units for reading one word at a time, the substitution of the method of attacking words by syllabication for the slower letter by letter or narrow phonogram analysis of the primary stage, and the substitution of the ability, as one child called it, of "reading by thinking" for "reading by whispering."

Margaret Ladd's dissertation published some years ago² clearly demonstrated the serious effects of failure to make this transition on academic school work in grade four and later. More recently Dr. Morris Krugman of the New York City Bureau of Child Guidance has shown the disastrous effects upon personality and emotional adjustment of this failure.³ Some of my own recent work shows that some children who make normal or even better than average progress during the first two grades become reading disabilities because of failure to throw off their well established primary habits and advance to higher levels.

² Ladd, Margaret R., "The Relation of Social, Economic and Personal Characteristics to Reading Ability," New York: Teachers College, Contributions to Education, 1933, No. 582.

³ Unpublished report.

That there is at least one other critical stage at a higher level is indicated in the dissertation of Dr. Eva Bond⁴ conducted on ninth grade pupils and the dissertation of Dr. Elden Bond⁵ based on tenth grade children. Although these studies demonstrate the importance of subtly diversified types of reading beyond those commonly developed in the intermediate grades, much remains to be done to discover the nature of the personal abilities and instructional factors which condition them.

3. *Comprehensive Inventory Approach*

The third trend is the increasing recognition of the value of what may be called the comprehensive diagnostic inventory approach in attempting to reveal the sources of reading ability and disability as compared to the previously popular tendency to look for a few, especially a few physiological, factors in diagnosis. That most reading disabilities can be traced to visual defects or to strephosymbolia or other dominance factors, or to emotional instability or any other single factor is a pretty thoroughly discredited assumption. It is becoming increasingly the practice to spread the diagnostic net exceedingly wide and it usually brings in a variety of catches, some of them rather surprising. I shall mention later one or two factors which probably justify more attention than has been given them in the past, although perhaps neither is surprising.

4. *Teacher Can Help Most Cases*

There is a growing tendency to recognize the fact that very comprehensive diagnostic inventories of prime value for preventive and corrective purposes may be administered by an intelligent classroom teacher after suitable training. Such a classroom teacher can prevent or correct the large majority of reading disabilities

⁴ Bond, Eva, "Reading and Ninth Grade Achievement," New York: Teachers College, Contributions to Education, 1938, No. 756.

⁵ Bond, Elden A., "Tenth-Grade Abilities and Achievements," New York: Teachers College, Contributions to Education, 1940, No. 813.

by conducting careful diagnostic inventories at intervals. This seems to be clearly demonstrated by the experiences of the New York City W. P. A. remedial reading project which, since its inauguration in 1934, has enlisted the full-time activities of from one hundred and fifty to as many as seven hundred and fifty teachers. These experiences, which represent individual work with nearly 100,000 pupils to date, indicate that at least nine out of ten of the most serious cases can be handled by a well-trained teacher. At the same time it is apparent that there are rare cases which will tax the ingenuity of the remedial reading expert, even one who has supplementary counsel of the psychiatrist, neurologist, physician and other specialists. That these cases are really quite rare seems to be indicated by the New York City W. P. A. project and by the experiences of H. T. Dunklin in the public schools of Buffalo.⁶

Dr. Dunklin's study shows that when careful inventories and properly adjusted instruction are provided forty-eight out of fifty-four "potential failures" were fairly successful during the first grade (they achieved at the end of the grade a reading grade score of 1.75 or better) whereas in a control group of fifty-four "potential failures" taking regular school instruction under various teachers only twenty-four reached this standard of moderate success. In the group in which the teachers provided diagnosis and preventive measures, however, six out of fifty-four of these "potential failures" fell below a grade score of 1.75. Although none was a non-reader it was apparent that expert study beyond the competence of the teacher was desirable.

5. *Maladjustment A Factor*

There is a tendency to give increased attention to the effects of personal or

⁶ Dunklin, Howard T., "The Prevention of Failure in First Grade Reading," New York: Teachers College, Contributions to Education, 1940, No. 802.

social maladjustment as causes of reading disability. One of my students, Miss Jeanette McClure,⁷ has recently completed a dissertation based upon expert clinical analysis of a group of reading disabilities and a control group of normal readers. She found convincing evidence that in a certain number of cases (a proportion which can not be given exactly) emotional blockings produced by unfortunate experiences were the sole or a major causal factor. Among them were conflict between parents concerning the choice of a school, the teachers' methods, or home management; conflict between one or both parents and the teacher; anxiety concerning the pupil's progress in reading either by teacher or parent; indifference of the parent to the pupil's work; sibling rivalries; classroom tactics which embarrass or unnerve the pupil or produce fears of failure and disgrace, and other forms of management which lead to destructive emotional adjustments.

A recent report by the New York City Bureau of Child Guidance to which the most serious cases of reading disability are referred gives similar evidence. In classroom teaching and in diagnostic and remedial work the tendency, I believe, would be to provide not only more but more expert child guidance especially to those pupils who have had or are likely to have some special difficulty with reading. Perhaps in as many as twenty per cent of the most serious disabilities, bad child management is a primary cause of the difficulty and only exceptionally good child management will remove the emotional barriers in the road of progress in reading.

6. *Physiological Factors Important*

There appears to be something of a resurrection of interest in the physiological and medical factors associated with reading disability. Twenty-five years ago

⁷ McClure, Jeanette, "A Study of the Relation of Emotional Factors to Reading Ability," New York: Teachers College, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1939.

it was far too commonly alleged by physicians and others that reading disabilities were likely to be the result of constitutional or acquired medical factors. As an increasing number of psychologists and educators entered the field these symptoms were less frequently observed. Recent evidence seems to indicate that although medical factors are of subordinate importance in the majority of cases, they are very fundamental in others. I shall offer one illustration growing out of the work shortly to be reported in the doctor's thesis by Mrs. Ruth Harrell.⁸

For a number of years Mrs. Harrell has had remarkable success in teaching reading and other language abilities to very serious cases of reading disability, alleged congenital aphasia, acquired aphasia due to brain injuries and the like. Some of her achievements are the most remarkable I have known. Occasionally Mrs. Harrell encountered persons, both children and adults, whose progress was unaccountably slow or whose rate of progress changed with shifts in living conditions in a surprising way. Some years ago she noticed, on the other hand, quite sharp improvements resulting from a change in environment. She had a hunch that these changes had something to do with diet. Following the advice of biochemists at Johns Hopkins, including Dr. McCollum, she directed her attention to the vitamin content of the diet of her cases. She soon developed a strong suspicion that the intake of vitamin B₁ had a marked influence upon the learning process. She found that some of her cases responded very much more quickly to remedial work when she augmented the diet with vitamin B₁. As her dissertation she investigated improvements in learning in a number of different lines in the case of two groups of children in

an orphanage. Half of the children had their normal institutional diet which was a little short in vitamin B₁. The others, without their knowing it, were administered daily 2 mgs. of thiamin. The results show that in most learning tests, especially in the kinds of learning activities similar to those involved in remedial reading, the children whose diet was augmented by thiamin improved more rapidly. Mrs. Harrell's study suggests definitely the possibility that a deficiency at least in this vitamin may be a contributing or even a major cause of failure in reading and that the presence of an abundance of the vitamin may occasionally be an essential feature of successful remedial or preventive instruction.

7. *Varied Reading vs. Machines And Drill*

Now a few words about preventive and remedial instruction. I think that the evidence is increasing that a wholesome and happy experience in school as a whole is an important, often indispensable, feature of remedial instruction as it is of ordinary teaching. This has been indicated in the work of the New York City W. P. A. project and I think even more clearly in the five-year experiment just completed in the Speyer School, Public School 500, especially in the case of seven classes of dull-normal children, I.Q.'s 75-90, and a special group of reading disabilities. In a large proportion of these cases progress seemed to depend greatly upon the teacher's ability to restore a pupil's self-confidence and enjoyment of the school program as a whole.⁹

There is also, I believe, a growing tendency to recognize that a well-rounded, varied program of normal reading activities nicely adjusted to individual needs is a more fruitful remedial or preventive procedure than any one of the more specialized artificial types of remedial de-

⁸ Harrel, Ruth, "The Effect of Added Thiamin on Learning," New York: Teachers College, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1942.

⁹ The author has in press, with the Teachers College Bureau of Publications, a monograph on the Speyer School Experiment.

vices or stunts. We are beginning to see that some of the narrow, restricted forms of drill, previously popular and still in existence, are more or less in the category of the traveling medicine show pills and gadgets. For the reading disability we rarely need anything more than the best and richest normal program applied with particular care and intelligence to the individual case. The remedial reading expert who is dependent upon a special kit of tricks, stunts, devices and gadgets is rapidly being driven out of fashion by the brute force of careful study and experimentation. In this connection I wish to report briefly some of the results of a study just completed by Mrs. Eloise Cason.¹⁰

Mrs. Cason undertook to determine the relative effects upon third grade children of three programs, one of which employed an apparatus, the Metronoscope, in accordance with instructions in the manual for using this instrument for the purpose in hand; another of which followed the program employing artificially phrased materials such as texts in which every other phrase was underlined or separated by a blank space or printed in a different color, etc.; and a third group engaged exclusively in free library reading. All instruction in reading for a period of a month was confined to one of these types. Before and after the period of instruction the children were carefully tested with several standardized tests of reading ability, with two tests employing flash-card procedures; two tests employing the flash-meter, a device which projects a word or phrase to a screen for a specified time; a test utilizing materials exposed in the Metronoscope itself; a record of eye movements obtained by the use of a mirror device; a rating by three speech experts of phrasing done in an oral reading situation; and finally with the

American Optical Company's Ophthalmograph which provides photographs of the movements of both eyes in reading a passage.

Which was the winner—the Metronoscope, the artificially phrased material, or free library reading? Well—it was a dead heat. In no single one of the abilities in which improvement was measured did the Metronoscope or the artificially phrased material program show any advantage whatever over free library reading. It is needless for me to report that both of these devices are being put to wholesale use here and there both in remedial reading clinics and in ordinary classrooms.

I shall quote Mrs. Cason's own conclusions:

It is reasonable to assume that the burden of proof rests with those who favor the introduction of such mechanical or artificial methods into the classroom. The point to be demonstrated is the effectiveness of the methods in meeting particular needs. Effectiveness implies not only that good results are produced but also that they are secured in the simplest and most economical manner. The evidence presented in this study showed, that at the level studied and under the limitations of the experimental conditions, these procedures were ineffective in the sense that results commensurate with the effort expended were not obtained. The results, moreover, showed that the reading habits of certain children were disorganized by subjecting them to this type of teaching procedure. This evidence is not an indictment of the use of such methods under all circumstances. It is entirely possible that such methods may produce improvement in selected individuals who do not respond to other methods of treatment, or help pupils older or younger than those studied.

In other words, Mrs. Cason, I believe, soundly advises that such methods expensive both of time and money should not be used unless there is good reason to believe that they will in each individual case produce favorable results that could not be secured in other ways.

¹⁰ Cason, Eloise B., "Mechanical Methods for Increasing the Speed of Reading," New York: Teachers College, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1942.

Growth in English Through a Unit on Photography

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THE PURPOSE of this paper is to report the growth in English as a result of a science unit taught to four sixth grade classes of a suburban public school. Other worthwhile outcomes will also be discussed.

Science In The English Program

When a science program was suddenly thrust upon the elementary school, the sixth grade teachers who taught under the departmental system decided to divide the work by having each one teach a few units. This was a temporary arrangement for that year. The English teacher was to teach the unit on photography. She took two university courses on the subject under very competent and stimulating instructors. The subject is fascinating and the teacher's enthusiasm was probably felt by the sixth grade children.

The unit was started through a study of light. Through reading, discussion, and experimentation the children learned:

1. How light travels
2. What happens when light strikes materials
3. What happens when light passes from one transparent material to another
4. Why we see ourselves in a mirror
5. How people have made light through the ages
6. Why we can see things with our eyes

The children were especially interested in how the eye works and in the way different lenses bend light. This resulted in a variety of activities. The butcher's son brought in a calf's eye, dissected it, found the lens, and explained how it worked. The optometrist's daughter brought a number of lenses and gave a

talk on near and far sightedness. The daughter of the ophthalmologist brought a bottle containing cataracts of the human eye and gave a talk on it. This led to a discussion and reading on the care of the eyes.

The children brought their cameras. They looked through the teacher's camera and saw the image upside down on the ground glass. They learned how a lens bends light. They brought cameras of all ages and types and learned how to operate them. They learned how to set the diaphragm and time to control the amount of light that entered their cameras, and the difference between shutter and diaphragm. They learned of the different kinds of film and how sensitive film was to light.

"Who discovered photography?" someone asked.

Here was the opportunity to present the history of this fascinating art; an opportunity to develop an appreciation for the work of scientists whose contributions help make our lives more enjoyable and more interesting. They found that on the principle of the "Camera obscura," discovered by Giambattista della Porta in 1596, was later built the pinhole camera followed by the box camera with lens. They were told of the struggle of individuals who tried to make permanent the image caught by the camera. The work of Daguerre in finally achieving the Daguerreotype, a hundred years ago, the production and advantages of the first negative, and the creation of the modern

¹ Dr. Zeligs' new book, *Glimpses Into Child Life*, has just been published by William Morrow and Co.

film by George Eastman, gave the children a greater understanding of photography as a science. It made them realize that a body of knowledge is built up through time and the accumulated effort of many individuals.

Color and composition were discussed with the help of the art teacher.

Then the shades were pulled down and photoflood lamps set up. The light was studied as it was directed on the subject. The children set their cameras and took portraits and group pictures. Outdoor pictures were taken at recess and noon.

A committee demonstrated the development and fixing of films and another committee showed how prints were made. The children were thrilled to see the image of the pictures they had taken appear on the sensitized paper. They summarized the unit in their note-books and the work was concluded with an objective test.

Language Growth

As interest grew the children took advantage of all available reading material. The science text book had a chapter on light, but nothing on photography. Books and magazines from the classroom library containing material on light, photography, or art, were put on a special shelf. The editor of *Minicam* presented the class with a dozen copies of back numbers. The children eagerly awaited their turns to take this magazine home overnight. Some of the children brought in other photography magazines and pamphlets. *The World Book*, *Compton's Encyclopedia*, the *Book of Knowledge*, and other reference books were used. The photography columns in the daily paper and in the Sunday section were read and posted on the bulletin board. All the books on the subject were withdrawn by the children from the branch library near the school.

Photographic literature makes difficult reading because of the many technical terms used. But the fascination this subject holds is a stimulation to the mastery of terminology. It brings about vocabulary growth through need and use. Informal book reviews came about naturally in discussing various phases of photography. The outside reading was voluntary. When asked what they had been reading some of the children listed a number of books and periodicals and explained how they happened to read them.

I was passing the photographic section of . . . department store. They put out a magazine of four pages every month. This contains pictures that people send in. I was attracted to them because we were studying that subject in school. I got some very helpful leaflets about cameras, enlarging equipment, and different kinds of films. They also gave me a paper which tells how to set up lights for indoor pictures. It showed some silhouettes and gave me a list of interesting books on photography.

I read all articles on "Know Your Camera" in the *Enquirer*. Each article had a different sub-title which explained how to do trick photography and get unusual effects in a picture. I read catalogs containing many different kinds of materials and how to use them. The retouching outfits particularly interested me. I read some pamphlets that came with a camera. They explained just how to take both day and night pictures.

I was over at my friend's house helping him develop some films when I told him that I got a new camera. He loaned me five photography magazines. They have a lot of information about set-ups, lights, etc. I spent most of the week-end reading them.

The children's papers showed how photography stimulated wider reading activities.

Oral English activities included talks explaining lenses and how the eye works, blackboard diagrams with explanations on how cameras work, how to make con-

tact prints, and how an enlarger works. Demonstrations by children of actual developing and printing created opportunities for talks and discussions, questions and explanations.

An increase in vocabulary came about through the use of necessary technical terms. These words were explained when used. Often children asked the meaning of certain words they came across in their reading. The use of technical words, if they are explained, enables the child to get more exact meaning from discussion and reading.

In the same way, growth in spelling was an outcome of need. In giving talks, special terms were put on the board. When a summary of the unit was composed by the class and written in notebooks the children raised their hands every time they did not know how to spell a word. The words were written on the blackboard and every child was held responsible for its spelling. Later the list of words was used for a spelling test. Holding children responsible for spelling creates a spelling consciousness that results in learning.

The need for letter writing came when the class had to write a letter of thanks to the editor of *Minicam* magazine for the copies he had sent them. Ordering material, asking for booklets, subscribing to magazines, and entering photography contests, required the knowledge and practice of writing business letters.

The study of composition in photography, the evaluation of pictures, and their arrangement on the bulletin board, correlated science with art.

The special need for care in handling photoflood lights and flash bulbs and precautions necessary in working with chemicals brought in safety education.

In dramatics the photoflood lamps and a sheet were used for giving shadow plays. Original poems and stories were

also dramatized. The children wanted to make a series of silhouettes showing the various scenes in original poems and those found in literature that would lend themselves to dramatization. They planned to photograph and enlarge the pictures and use them as illustrations of their written work or for a frieze. Unfortunately the class did not have the necessary adjoining dark rooms separated by a wide doorway which is required for making silhouettes.

Written compositions were illustrated with photographs taken by the children. These included interesting experiences, trips, schoolyard activities, and descriptions of pets. On Zoo day the children were asked to write compositions about some animal or bird found in the Zoo. It was suggested that those who had cameras might illustrate their compositions with pictures they would take at the Zoo. The teacher went around with the children studying the animals and taking pictures.

Other Desirable Outcomes

The children were asked to list quickly the things they learned which helped them. Table I shows that they became more light conscious, noticed differences of light and shade, of bright sunlight and artificial light. They gained a better understanding of the basic principles underlying the make-up of a camera, the difference between various kinds of cameras, and how to use their own cameras under different light conditions and for different purposes. They came to know the possibilities and limitations of their cameras. They learned that films vary in size and kind.

The children realized that photography is an art and composition is important. It taught them to notice their surroundings and to seek the beautiful. They became interested in the technique of developing films and making prints.

How did this interest find expression in activities? Of the 145 children who took the unit 20 boys and 20 girls started to use the camera while 28 boys and the same number of girls who had been unsuccessful improved in their use of the camera. Thirteen boys and two girls started to do their own developing and printing.

The children were asked to write what pleasures they derived from this study. Many of them pointed out a greater awareness of their surroundings, a search for beauty, the joy of taking and developing pictures, the pleasure and self-confidence that comes with success, fun in having records of vacations, trips, and camp, fun in showing pictures to friends, and the use of pictures in school for talks and reports.

Learning photography gave me pleasure in looking, finding, and taking interesting pictures. Now I will have something to do this summer.

It is a thrill to me to see something and know that I will be able to see the same thing years later. Cute and interesting pictures delight me especially when I take them myself.

I find most pleasure in taking pictures when my subjects are unaware of the fact.

We have a neighborhood nature club and knowing how to take pictures instantly and perfectly will help me catch pictures of a bird or snail.

I am hoping to get some kind of dark room because all the pictures I will want to take this summer will cost a pretty penny to develop.

One day my cousin let me take pictures with his camera. But all my pictures came out blurred or completely blank. I was disgusted and stopped taking pictures. Since we learned about it in school I take good pictures and really like it.

I have fun in watching for the right moment. Sometimes I look in the loveliest places and wait for a picture.

When I grow up and retire I will still keep on taking and developing pictures.

Last summer, in camp, I paid no attention to photography although we had an excellent darkroom. This summer I am going to get much pleasure out of it.

My brother now respects my knowledge of photography and lets me use his expensive camera. I know how to put in the film, take it out, develop it, and make prints. Pretty soon I will be enlarging my pictures. I intend to make photography my summer pleasure.

It was certainly a pleasure when I got a picture of a flock of quails just landing on a small island in the middle of the river. I also got a picture of them flying.

Now when I see something interesting or cute it attracts my attention. At other times I would have just passed it by.

When all the boys in our neighborhood talked about photography I didn't understand them. Now I can talk and work with them in photography.

We are living in the age of science. The child should not just accept the achievements of science but should learn to appreciate the effort and struggle that went into its development. He should understand the scientific process and be able to apply the laws of science intelligently rather than mechanically. Of course, in the elementary school this can be given only in a simple way. But the teacher can try to make science personal and meaningful to the child in his everyday life.

Science can easily be correlated with the language arts since English is the medium through which it is taught. However, the teacher must consciously teach the English along with the science if she is to get the best results.

Photography lends itself well to science teaching because of its unusual appeal to human interest activities, to art, and nature. It can be tied up closely with the child's everyday life.

Photography taught as one of the

science units in the sixth grade gave opportunities for improvement in reading, spelling, oral English, dramatization, and written composition. It helped make the child more aware of his surroundings and provided for leisure time activities.

SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL ON PHOTOGRAPHY

Periodicals

Good Photography

Minicam Photography

Photo-Art

Photography Handbook

Popular Photography

Prize Photography

The Camera

U. S. Camera

Books

Noblette, C. F. Brehm, and Priest. *Elementary Photography*. New York: The Macmillan Co.

Eastman Kodak Co., *How to Make Good Pictures*. Eastman Kodak Co.

Center, S. S. and Herzberg, Max-J. "Leisure Reading" contains a good bibliography on photography for grades seven, eight, and nine.

Beauchamp, Melrose, and Blough. *Discovering Our World*, Grade Six. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1936. Pps. 229-273.

Weed and Rexford. *Useful Science*. Book Two. Pps. 294-337.

Unearthing A Children's Classic

MILDRED WIER BARNES

A FEW WEEKS ago I talked with the head of the children's department in the Illinois state library and asked whether *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot*¹ was included in its collection. It was not. A few years ago, the volume was not available to children in the New York Public Library. Whether it is now I do not know. It is included in practically no courses dealing with children's literature. The book was published in 1882, at the time Joel Chandler Harris was beginning his writings about Uncle Remus. *Uncle Remus* has been translated into almost every one of the leading foreign languages; and so far as I know *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* has never been translated into any, yet in some respects *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* is even superior to the work which is deservedly an accepted classic.

In her preface Mrs. Prynelle, the author, says, "I have learned that Mr. Harris, in *Uncle Remus*, has already given the *Tar Baby*; but as I have not seen the book, and, as our versions are probably different, I shall let mine remain just as Chris told it to the 'chil'en'." The coincidence, I think, adds to the authenticity of the tale. Although both writers include this particular story, the writings of each are quite different from those of the other. But neither pretended to be the author of every story in his book any more than Chaucer pretended to be the originator of all his wonderful *Canterbury tales*. No one person ever himself made up any thing as great as *Uncle Remus, Diddie, Dumps, and Tot, the Canterbury Tales, the Arabian Nights, or the Decameron*. Uncle Remus said, "There ain't nobody so smart, but what there ain't somebody, somewhere's what's smarter."

Diddie, Dumps, and Tot is the story of the life of three little girls on their southern plantation home before 1860. The nicknames of the little girls constitute the title of the volume. It, unlike Harris's volumes, has a plot running throughout the book, interspersed with just a few stories told to the children by the servants. My favorite story is *The Wishing Stone*. Mammy tells the children of a little fairy named Cheery who wanted to make people happy, and so she made a beautiful garden where children could come and play—could wade in the brooks, pick the flowers, and tumble on the grass. Another little fairy named Dreary thought that Cheery did not really know how to make people happy and she, herself, would show her. Therefore Dreary placed a wishing stone in the garden, and every time anyone would sit on the stone and wish, his wish would come true. "Dey'd wush dey had money, an' friends, an' sense, and happiness, an' religion; an' 'twould all come true jes like dey wush fur. . . An' dey'd wush dey wuz lovely, an' good, an' grand; and t'would all come to pass jes so." Cheery was afraid that people might not be made happy by having their wishes granted and had begged Dreary to take the charm off the stone. Dreary finally consented to allow the spell to be removed if anybody ever made a wish for someone else. "Who," (according to Mammy) says Dreary to herself, "is gwine ter wish fur things fur tudder folks?" Cheery's garden was completely spoiled, and people were all quarreling about who would wish next and stepping on the flowers and tramping down the grass. One day a poor little lame girl who had never heard of the rock

¹ By Prynelle, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882.

came to the garden and sitting by accident on the stone wished that all the poor children she knew could enjoy such a place. The spell was broken. Perhaps you will ask like Dumps, "But, Mammy, what about the little girl? did she ever get well and strong, and not be lame any more?" "Well, honey, you see de Lord he fixes all dat. He sont fur her one night, an' she jus' smiled bright and happy like, an' laid right back in de angel's arms; and he tuck her right along up thu de hebenly gates an' soon as he sot her down, an' her foot totch dem golden streets, de lameness and sickness, and po'ness all come right." Most of the cynical atheists of ten and twelve (and I have taught them) as well as the cynical atheist of forty and fifty like the story. It raises for them the question, "Are people really made happy by getting what they want?"

The ages at which *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* will first be greatly enjoyed are from nine to twelve. However, my three-year-old will listen to it, and my five-year-old will ask to have it read to her. And I know high school teachers and college

professors who use it as a reference book in history courses. A college professor who has received his doctor's degree at one of our greatest Eastern universities told me that he found the slender volume of great value in teaching the manners and customs as well as the morals of our country during the nineteenth century.

The following passage from "Uncle Snake-Bit Bob" illustrates the universality of the story's appeal:

Uncle Snake-Bit Bob is living still. He has a little candy store in a country town. He does not meddle in politics. He says, "I don't cast my suffrins fur de Dimercracks (Democrats), ner yit fur de Publicans (Republicans). I can't go 'ginst my color by voting de Dimercrack papers; en ez fur dem Publican! Well, ole Bob he done hear wat de Book say 'bout publicans an' sinners, and dat's ernuf fur him. He's er gittin' uperds in years now; pretty soon he'll hatter shove off fur dat heb'nly sho'; an' wen de Lord sen' atter him, he don't want dat angel ter cotch him in no kinwunshuns (conventions) 'long wid 'publicans an' sinners." And so Uncle Bob attends to his store, and mends chairs and tubs, and deals extensively in chickens and eggs; and perhaps he is doing just as well as if he were in Congress.

Speech and the Classroom Teacher: Some Specific Suggestions

LOUISE ABNEY

Teachers College of Kansas City, Missouri

A growing number of teachers are aware of the need for systematic attention to speech in the classroom, and are asking for concrete help. Here an experienced observer and practitioner offers workable suggestions.

—J. J. D. B.

Last week I was in a fifth grade elementary schoolroom in Kansas City where a young classroom teacher was interestingly directing her class in the study of Speech.

On the bulletin board were posters made by the children, carrying slogans (also made by the children) directed toward the development of speech awareness. This was one of them:

CLIMB THE GOOD SPEECH LADDER!

Obviously the poster represented a ladder, on every rung of which had been written a word which had been mispronounced in some class throughout the day, and on which further concentration seemed necessary. Among the ladder words in this particular room were:

geography	arctic
umbrella	temperature
adult	picture
history	pitcher
catcher	far
hundred (not "hunderd")	fire
children (not "childern")	for
bronchial	four

Other evidences of student art work illustrated these statements, under the caption: SPEECH IN EVERY DAY LIFE.

We use speech in—

MAKING FRIENDS (and the accompanying illustration was a friendly fellowship where conversation was evidently being much enjoyed.)

PLAYING (and on the playground a game was in progress, with the umpire calling out to the players.)

SINGING (a choir in robes was pictured.)

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION ON THE AIR (RADIO)

On another section of the blackboard, speech standards reminded each student to check himself as he spoke. In fact, after oral presentations it was the custom of this entire class to join in a friendly and constructive evaluation of the student's speech personality. Here were the standards in this fifth grade group:

1. *Am I standing straight?* (Posture is of vital importance in the speech personality, and here is an excellent opportunity to correlate speech and the health program.)
2. *Am I looking at my audience, including everyone as I talk?*
3. *Am I thinking well?* (How closely this is related to today's challenge to evaluate material, analyze issues, weigh propaganda, and discuss in an unprejudiced way the current affairs of school, community, and national interest!)
4. *Am I sure of my material?* (Are the facts authoritative, recent, and as complete as possible?)

5. *Am I speaking loudly enough?* (No matter how important the content of a talk may be, if it can't be heard by the listeners, it has no chance to "hit home." This standard is important in oral reading, storytelling, the giving of book reviews, sharing current events—in fact, in every oral activity throughout the day.)
6. *Am I speaking distinctly?* (If one cannot be understood, the difficulty is probably one of articulation, which again brings us to phonetics and the production of correct speech sounds. If one cannot be heard, the problem is one of volume.)
7. *Am I speaking at a suitable rate?* (Sometimes the material shared demands a faster rate than other times. Meaning should always govern rate.)
8. *Am I using correct English* (grammar) *and pronunciation?*
9. *Am I using a pleasing tone and manner?*
10. *Am I bringing full meaning out of my words?* (Is my expression true?)
11. *Am I a courteous listener?*

Simular standards could be effectively used in every classroom in America today. The words need not be the same, since each group should have the privilege of expressing group sentiment in words of its own choosing; but these general principles of good speech should be written on the consciousness of every American student and applied by him when speaking. The standards may be printed on a permanent chart, written on the blackboard, kept in a Speech notebook, or simply remembered. Their one aim is to create a speech consciousness in the boys and girls, offering them certain criteria by which to evaluate their own achievement in oral activities.

A seventh grade class might well include more advanced standards, while a kindergarten group, being unable to read from the printed chart, may make and follow these four simple suggestions:

I will know what I want to say before I begin.

I will look at the children.

I will talk so everyone can hear me.

I will "talk plain."

Yes, the setting up of acceptable speech standards is within the reach of every classroom teacher. But *let them come from the students*. Self-made rules are easier to follow than those which are imposed upon us by others.

To return to this fifth grade group which I observed last week. Further work in pronunciation was achieved through a word ball game, in which the score depended upon the correct pronunciation of words frequently missed. The two teams within the class were in friendly competition, one point being given for every word-ball thrown and correctly returned. Here were the words of the game:

catch	family
forget	particularly
pretty	friendship
violet	whisper
instead	where
recognize	just
sword	poem
toward	pretend
often	every
believe	armistice
maintenance	really
exquisite	government

Choral speaking, in which there was very evident enjoyment and appreciation of the poems interpreted, a true rhythm and emphasis, with effective pause marking the completion of an idea, was another phase of the speech program. The choric material had been chosen from a Reader, the discussion which preceded it tied in with the social science lesson, and the participation was democratic.

What this classroom teacher was doing, others can do. Basic principles may be applied in individual ways—just so they are applied. Incidental teaching of speech such as we have had for many years is not adequate, if we may draw conclusions from the high percentage of speech errors heard throughout our upper grades, high school, and college classes, where students have supposedly “come through” some of the finest courses of study in English to be found in America. We have neglected oral English (speech), and our incidental teaching has become accidental. Furthermore, we have paid a price—and a *high* price—for this neglect.

What Price—Neglected Opportunity in Speech Education

A few years ago, in Kansas City, with the co-operation of classroom teachers and student clinicians, a survey was conducted to ascertain just what the speech situation was. Nor was it any different in Kansas City from the situation in other cities where studies have been made! We found in our classroom slovenly, careless, and indistinct speech—not every place, but in too many places. We heard perverted slang. In certain areas we found many brogues, though Kansas City is relatively low in foreign population. Types of provincial speech were heard; and a lack of common standards of excellence, especially in pronunciation, seemed to prevail. Classroom teachers were well aware of these conditions, yet the clinical speech program was a highly specialized one, adapted neither to the needs of every child nor to classroom teaching. What could be done?

A Constructive Approach to Speech

What special qualifications should the classroom teacher have? First of all, a *vision of better speech as the right of every child*, not simply the maladjusted

through defective speech, nor the highly gifted. *An ear attuned* to what is good and what is poor in speech is also needed. *Phonetic training* as to how the individual speech sounds are made is essential; for the mastery of thirty-nine sounds and practice in the proper use of them will develop beautiful spoken English in anyone. A good example is worth as much or more than a corrective method—so let the teacher look to his own speech patterns!

And here are the five basic principles upon which a constructive program of speech education rests. They are being followed in hundreds and thousands of classroom in America today. They can be developed in *yours*.

1. A happy attitude toward speech, and the speech program as it affects the lives of the boys and girls.
2. Correct standards of speech, which should be drawn from the pupils with the assistance of the teacher.
3. Speech-consciousness in the minds of pupils—an awareness of what is good and what is poor in speech patterns: tone, articulation, pronunciation, diction.
4. Definite education in phonetics, that each sound-unit may be correctly made.
5. An application of good speech in every area, with daily opportunity for use of good speech in various subjects and activities.

This program comes to you as a challenge, as an obligation, and a privilege. You may accept these words of Mr. Gladstone, former prime minister of England: “All time and money spent in the training of speech and voice is an investment that pays a greater dividend than any other.” But the *proving* of those words is a personal matter—a challenge to the classroom teacher!

Council News and Comment

Report of the Executive Committee and Planning Commission

Submitted to The Board of Directors of
The National Council of Teachers
of English, Nov. 27, 1942

Since the last meeting of the Board of Directors, events of tremendous significance to all the people of the world have placed unprecedented responsibilities upon the Council and its leadership. Scarcely two weeks had passed since the delegates returned home from Atlanta before the fatal news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor came to shock the American people. America was plunged into war—a life and death struggle that called for the mobilization of all its resources, including the schools and the organizations of teachers.

About two weeks later the Executive Committee and the Council's Planning Commission met in Chicago in special session. Acting upon the recommendations of the Commission, the Executive Committee at this meeting inaugurated a series of steps designed to give leadership to American teachers of English in their new and difficult tasks. The first of these was the preparation of the report, "The Role of the English Teacher in Wartime," the result of two days of deliberation by the Planning Commission. About 25,000 copies of this report have subsequently been distributed among teachers of English throughout the country. A second step was the adoption of a series of provisions for the extension of Council membership during the difficult period of war. A third step was the organization of an Emergency Committee to co-operate with similar committees in other organizations.

At the same time the Executive Committee decided to suspend, at least for the year, its usual program of regional meet-

ings and to substitute for them, under the direction of the Public Relations and Regional Conference Committees a nationwide series of local conferences of teachers of English on English Instruction and the War. Thanks to the able leadership of Chairman Harold A. Anderson and the energetic management of Paul Wagner, secretary of the Public Relations Committee and now in the service as ensign, these local conferences were highly successful. With the aid of an efficient and devoted clerical staff in the Council office, they succeeded in promoting literally hundreds of such meetings in the spring, and nearly 100 this fall. Details of these meetings are found in the reports of the committees concerned.

Further efforts in support of the war program were made through the Council's publications. Its official organs, the *English Journal* and *College English*, carried the official reports as well as numerous excellent symposia and articles on English and the war. Several pamphlets designed for wide distribution were published in an effort to meet the new problems. All were displayed and sold at the local conferences.

Officers and other leaders of the Council travelled to many parts of the nation to talk with teachers of English about the crucial issues now facing them. The Council President attended Commissioner Studebaker's National Institute on Education and the War in Washington on August 31, in order to gear the Council's efforts to the total educational program of the nation.

The Council has just purchased four \$1,000 United States war bonds, Series F.

The High School Section of the Council, under the chairmanship of Dr. Angela Broening, has accepted responsibility for the preparation of source units in co-

operation with the Schools Division, War Savings Staff, of the Treasury Department.

Indirectly related to the war effort is the Council's new interest in the field of elementary English instruction. Late in August the Council purchased the *Elementary English Review* from Mrs. J. L. Certain of Detroit. It is being provisionally edited from the Council office. At the request of Miss Mary Reed, formerly chairman of the Elementary Section, a new chairman was appointed for this group. Miss Reed, whose services have been invaluable to the Council, has consented to remain as member of the committee. Dr. Dora V. Smith is the new chairman. Plans for producing a series of documents for the use of elementary teachers are now under way.

As one means of promoting solidarity among the allies, the Council's Committee on International Relations, of which Mr. H. A. Dominovich is chairman, has taken steps to increase cultural contact between the Americas. Miss Rachel Salisbury, a member of this committee, is responsible for a plan by which complimentary memberships in the Council are extended to selected teachers of English in Latin-American high schools and colleges. Contributions from various local English clubs defray the costs of printing and mailing the Council organs to the teachers in Latin American countries.

Other Council committees have seen the challenge of the war and have initiated

significant activities within their fields of interest. Yet much remains to be done. I recommend specifically:

1. That a Committee on Adult Education be appointed at once, and that it be granted an appropriation of \$1,000.00 to carry on its work. This Committee should be charged with the responsibility of co-operating with local Boards of Education and local teachers' groups, regardless of subject fields, in a nation-wide drive to eliminate illiteracy among the adult population. This Committee, or another operating in the field of adult education, should likewise promote forums throughout the nation for the discussion of issues arising out of post-war reconstruction, based perhaps upon the consideration of our war aims. Efforts should be made to secure additional funds from other sources for this purpose.
2. That all Council committees prepare source units or collaborate in the preparation of source units illustrating principles set forth in the Council's report on "The Role of the English Teacher in Wartime."

Council Membership For Elementary Teachers

The Board of Directors of the National Council of Teachers of English, at its Chicago meeting on Nov. 27, decided to establish the membership fee of \$2.50 for those who subscribe to the *Elementary English Review*. In the future, subscription to the *Review* and Council membership together will cost \$2.50. Action on the membership status of present individual subscribers to the *Review* is expected shortly.

The Educational Scene

The *Curriculum Journal* reports that a language arts committee in Minneapolis, consisting of principals and teachers, recently made a preliminary study of how language composition is related to the total school program. The committee plans to report to the entire principals' group next year, not only on the results of the survey, but also on the functional opportunities of a modern curriculum to promote language development, on the improvement of the mechanics of oral and written expression, on the place of the language period in the total program, and on the encouragement of creative writing. Dr. Dora V. Smith is adviser to the committee.

Rose N. Cohen suggests, in the October, 1942, issue of *Education*, a series of units on English for an air age, many of which are suitable for the elementary school. They include: The history of aviation, tracing the dreams of flying from the myths and legends of earliest peoples up to the scientific successes of the present, the pioneers of aviation, from Da Vinci to the Wright brothers, Admiral Byrd, and Amelia Earheart; the experiences of aviation, providing contact with all phases of flying and with the sensations, thoughts, and feelings which accompany flight; the social effects of aviation, covering the cultural, commercial, geographical, and other implications of the air age; and the vocational opportunities of aviation, providing a survey of the important fields of work which aviation has opened to men and women.

Lorena E. Wilcox recently traced the relative emphasis upon formal grammar in language textbooks through the four

decades since 1900. She reports in the October, 1942, *Elementary School Journal* that formal grammar received the heaviest emphasis during the years from 1901-1910, but that a sharp reaction set in during the following decade. The twenties saw a slight increase in formal grammar lessons, but this was again followed by a recession in the thirties. Miss Wilcox believes that the present decade will witness a perceptible trend toward more formal grammar, on the theory that the pendulum will swing as it did before, and on the ground that four books appearing in the late thirties contained rather more grammatical terms than did earlier books.

One questions whether the differences noted since the first decade are sufficiently large to indicate any changes in the trend. Moreover, the "pendulum" theory of educational change, considered apart from other curricular and social factors, has doubtful scientific validity. Certainly Miss Wilcox's data for the period as a whole indicate, first, a swing away from heavy formal grammar content and, second, a fairly consistent retention of a minimum body of grammatical terms and concepts.

Under the title, "Do Our Reading Tests Test the Right Words?", S. Vincent Wilkins of Boston University reports, in the September, 1942, *Journal of Educational Research*, the results of a study of the validity of present reading vocabulary tests in terms of frequency of usage. He concludes on the basis of his findings that "reading vocabulary testing, as evidenced by the Iowa test, does not fulfill the requirements of testing words in relation to their type or category frequency of usage."

Review and Criticism

FOR TEACHERS AND SUPERVISORS

The Art Of Teaching Reading

*Effective Reading Instruction in the Elementary School*¹ is a volume designed to serve as a practical guide to both teachers-in-service and persons preparing to teach reading. It gives specific treatment to the mechanics of reading, objectives for silent and oral reading in grades one to eight inclusive, and the vocabulary problems of elementary-school children and outlines a definite reading program for each grade. Rather detailed treatment is given to measurement in the reading instructional program, but diagnostic and corrective practices are scarcely more than touched upon—perhaps because of stress on prevention of reading difficulties through a systematically planned, developmental, continuous program extending throughout the eight years of the elementary school.

Each chapter is well organized and so presented that major points and their supporting detailed treatment are clearly impressed, both by the format of the book and the verbal treatment of topics. The chapter on reading readiness and those devoted to the program for the successive grades contain detailed, lengthy lesson plans that exemplify the teaching procedures that have been outlined in earlier sections of the respective chapters. Each chapter concludes with a selected, annotated bibliography of related readings and a list of questions and exercises to guide study and discussion.

In particular do the authors—all experienced classroom teachers as well as instructors of teachers-to-be—stress the

continuous, all-school function of reading and the importance of the mastery of mechanics and comprehension skills as the bases for interest in reading. Careful provision for individual differences is urged and explained for each phase of the reading program. While the authors acknowledge that reading instruction cannot be presented as an isolated activity, they maintain that reading should have a place in the daily program as a regular "subject." They see opportunistic or incidental learning as likely to be ineffective.

The reader will find in *Effective Reading Instruction* a really practical and helpful guide whose statements are validated by research and the best current practice in public schools. The outlined procedures, if followed slavishly, would prove stereotyped and not fitted to any particular group of children. However, the reader is repeatedly urged to modify placement and sequence of curricular procedures to suit her child-group. For instance, some school systems may not find it necessary to devote most of the first-grade period to developing readiness for reading, though the authors are to be commended for their advocacy of a sufficient span of time and experiential program to guarantee such readiness. On controversial points, such as the use of mechanical devices in building up the various reading skills, the authors are usually impartial in giving the advantages and disadvantages of procedures reflecting either point of view. The book is worth your attention if elementary-school reading concerns you.

—MILDRED A. DAWSON
University of Tennessee

¹ Broom, M. E., Duncan, Mary A. A., Emig, Dorothy, and Stueber, Josephine. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1942. Pp. x + 482. \$3.50.

The Right Book For The Right Child

The third edition of *The Right Book for the Right Child*² is a complete revision of a graded buying list of children's books which began with the *Winnetka Graded Book List*, published in 1926. The books included in the revised edition have been selected and annotated by a subcommittee of the Board of Library Service to Children and Young People of the American Library Association, under the chairmanship of Miriam Snow. The Research Department of the Winnetka Public Schools has graded the books under the direction of Carleton Washburne and Mabel V. Morphett. Selection has been brought up-to-date by the dropping of a considerable number of early titles and by the adding of 852 titles. The inclusion of dates of publication, omitted in earlier editions, serves to increase the general usefulness of the list. New features comprise: a "Pre-School List," prepared by a special committee of the Association for Childhood Education, under the chairmanship of Mary L. Morse; a section, "Read Aloud Books," which offers suggestions for introducing books at different stages of development; and a re-grouping of reading materials intended for the junior high school level in lists for the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades.

In its present form, *The Right Book for the Right Child* embodies the results of longtime research based upon an objective method of analyzing vocabulary and sentence structure in children's books in terms of the reading skill needed by a child to read a particular book with ease and fluency. Because techniques have been refined and improved "the grading of a book as to difficulty is indicated to the tenth of a degree." No attempt is

made at an objective grading of verse, and some picture books are described as "too short to grade." Age labels are deemed sufficient for the pre-school list. That difficulty may not be an insuperable barrier to enjoyment for many young readers is recognized by the editors. They have expressed an awareness of this in the Preface:

It should also be borne in mind that a child may be intrigued by the content of a book above his reading ability to the point of overcoming its not-too-great-difficulty. And of course any youngster may be very much interested in a book that requires less reading skill than he possesses. Occasional voluntary reading of books graded somewhat above his reading skill probably does not harm a child; a large amount of reading of books graded at or even below his level probably increases his facility and interest and thereby raises his reading level.

Teachers who have shared sympathetically in reading with children have come to realize that just when a child may read a particular book is not so important as how he reads it. If early experiences with books have spelled delight, he begins to draw upon his speaking vocabulary for aid in getting on with reading. If the content of a book grips his imagination strongly enough, he persists. The book he enjoys he reads and re-reads because each reading brings new meanings and deepens associations. One book leads to another, and gradually reading becomes personal exploration in the best sense. For these reasons, teachers may be interested in comparing the books chosen by children in their groups with those recommended in *The Right Book for the Right Child*. In general, this list will be most useful to those who have had much experience with children and who possess an assimilated knowledge of children's literature.

—ELOISE RAMSEY
Wayne University

² Edited by Carleton Washburne, Miriam Snow, and Mabel V. Morphett. New York: The John Day Company, 1942. \$3.00.

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